

Bigfork Steering Committee Minutes
November 8, 2027
Community Forum
(Amended)

In Attendance: Craig Wagner, Pat Wagner, Gary R, Ridderhoff, Sue Hanson, Clarice Ryan, Sally Janover, John Lang, Steve Zabaro, Paul Rana, Marilyn Gordon Graham, Steve Zabaro, Paul Guerrant, Edd Blackler, Shelley Gonzales, Darrel Coverdell, Chuck Gough, Chuck Harris, George Darrow, Elna Darrow, Don Loranger, Joe Brenneman, Larry Van Rinsum, Debbie Pierson, Carole Meyer, Buz Meyer, Julie Spencer, Paul Rana, Alex Strickland, Doug Averill, Chase Averill, Clarice Ryan

The Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Craig Wagner at 12:000 P. M.

Agenda: The Agenda was accepted.

Minutes: The minutes were adopted as amended. (m/sc Hansen/Zabaro)

Treasurer's Report: Chuck stated that our balance was the same but he had gotten a bill from UPS but he did not have an invoice. Pat reported it was probably the bill from the Lake County Planning Committee. (The report was accepted. (Darrow, E/Solberg)

Community Forum:

Bigfork Neighborhood Plan: Shelley reported the information that she was supposed to get from the county the next day took 3 weeks to finally appear, but she finally has the numbers she needed to compile the future growth areas of Bigfork. It has been determined that Bigfork Zoning District will grow 47% by 2025. She and BJ and Eric from the county planning department will be walking around the zoning area and will try to determine the areas needed for this growth both in commercial and residential areas.

Bigfork Fire Department: Chuck Harris, Bigfork Fire Chief talked how he has been working to get insurance rates down by getting our ISO down. This is an Insurance Services Organization that tests fire departments for their ability to provide fire protection. Prior to this spring we were a 6 in the area that have fire hydrants and an 8 in the rural, now we are a 5 and 6 in those areas. It is not enough to drop our rates which need to probably be at least a 4 in the hydrant area. We will keep trying. We should have a brand new 105 ft ladder truck by next late next summer. We need this as sometimes a fireman needs to get on top of the roof, and our present trucks will not allow this on some present roofs. This vehicle is going to be equipped with 5 items such as "The Jaws of Life" and will be equipped as a rescue vehicle. It is not going to be used just for roofs, it will be used for rescues, both mountain and water, as the ladder can be used horizontally as well as vertically. Last summer we raised \$70,000.00 at our golf tournament and this will go directly to the training tower fund. This is a 3 story tower to be used to train our volunteers on how to put out different fires and can be used over and over and shared with other fire departments. The approximate cost is \$120,000.00. Hopefully these new pieces of equipment will help lower the ISO number. However hearing the projected growth number and widening of Highway 35 also tells me we need to do even more. We, like the QRU need a larger station, with living facilities and a partially paid fire station along with volunteers. We have a very professional fire department, we train once a week, and it is professional, not just a good old boys meeting.

Bigfork Water and Sewer: Julie Spencer stated they are preparing to open bids for the phase one of an upgrade to the waste water treatment plant. She also stated they are not at full capacity yet.

Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork: Craig received a call from Paul Mutascio (out of town) that the sidewalk by Brookies Cookies is progressing. There will be a rock and powdered metal railing along there to match the guard rail that Doug Averill is planning for the existing metal one across from Saddlehorn on Grand Ave.

Joe Brenneman/Storm Water: Next week a contract will be signed with an engineering firm to do a study on the needs of Bigfork with regard to storm water runoff that goes into Flathead Lake. Funding has been secured for that through grants although it still needs to be determined how much of the Bigfork area will be studied. Joe also introduced Larry Van Rinsum from the Flathead Conservation District and Debbie Pierson, Flathead County grant writer who were a big help to him. Larry explained that water quality, from drinking to storm water and in all phases is a big issue today. He recommends that The Bigfork Steering Committee form a water shed sub committee, with by-laws and a board of Directors. This would be a decision making group. The county would be doing all the work in securing funds and connect the subcommittee with a water shed coordinator. The final decision on any water projects would be the sub committee's decision. He urged us, especially with the projected growth that we consider having developers use good conservation ideas in their developments. Larry stated that there has never been a successful water shed committee in Montana and he felt that Bigfork is the community that can accomplish this task. The county will provide the funding and technical assistance but the committee would be able to set priorities and make the decisions on how the money was spent. Debbie Pierson thanked both Sue Hanson and Julie Spencer for all their help with gathering information so she could get the grants which will be paying for this initial study. She also explained the different grants and amounts she received.

Bigfork Water and Sewer: Julie Spencer announced they were opening a bid for their additional water treatment plant today. They are not up to full limit yet.

Water Quality Meeting: Don Loranger and Paul Rana were present at the meetings in Polson that took place last month. Don said that there were representatives from other areas that had large lakes, Lake Tahoe, CA and Nevada, Lake Pend Oreille, ID. Setbacks are a very important issue along with the legal aspects of them. Flathead is becoming more food nutrient polluted. One of the major pollutants found in these lake waters is pharmaceuticals which are also being discussed by Flathead county. The commissioners have not yet reached a solution on how to dispose of them but several avenues are being discussed. There was discussion of the proposed mining in Canada and how it will affect Flathead Lake. Paul mentioned The Tahoe Basin Agency is quite large and received federal funding.

Saddlehorn: Doug Averill mentioned he had someone visit just recently to discuss environmental water quality and storm runoff in the Saddlehorn project. He also has been working with Allied Waste and Flathead County to try and get recycling here in Bigfork. He is working to make Saddlehorn a sustainable community. Doug also included a possible chance to generate electricity using the fall system in the Saddlehorn Sewer Lines for the Bigfork area. This process was discussed when some guests came to Bigfork and saw the hydroelectric plant at Pacific Corp.

Vice Chairperson: Elna read a bulletin from the state legislature that states they are studying to make a clear statute so counties have the authority through their planning process and sub division regulations to require public sewer, and to encourage community public sewer and coordinate with county and state with incentives. She will keep us posted as they work on this.

Resort Tax: Gordon Graham reported on his visit in Red Lodge. Red Lodge is an incorporated city, they charge 3% and they have been able to do so much with their profits. Gordon's full report is on the Chamber of Commerce web site. John Lang reported on several cities in the state that have resort taxes.

Lake County Planning: Paul said they had two drive thrus and two more to do so that all committee members know how the different areas look. Their next meeting will be on November 16, 2007 at 9:00 am at the Saddlehorn Discovery Tower.

Vision Committee: Edd deferred to Sue Hanson as she chaired the meeting. Sue said they spent much of the time defining the different committees and sharing names of people who could chair them. Don Loranger brought up his motion which has been tabled. There was discussion on this and in the essence of time it was tabled again. Craig announced that we would we bring it up at the next meeting.

Announcements: **We need people to help on a new and upcoming watershed committee with support from the county, mentioned early in the meeting!!!!!!!!!!**

We meet again on November 15, 2007 12:00 Bethany Lutheran Church.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45

Pat Wagner, Secretary.